

Comments on Docket 14-115 (As of 7-30-14, 2:00 P.M.) - Wilson

7521744612.txt

The FCC should act to preempt state laws which prohibit municipal broadband networks. Such restrictions do not serve any valid public purpose. Existing municipal efforts provide a higher level of service than private providers, and all levels of government are free to provide services which their constituents demand, vote for, and pay for.

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Competition is good.

I cannot overstate that. Competition is good.

Bans on municipal broadband serve only to prop up monopolies that should not exist solely because of legislation.

Natural monopolies for services like water and sewer make sense.

Monopolies for broadband service do not.

Claiming that one cable provider and one DSL provider, along with expensive wireless providers, constitute sufficient competition is disingenuous.

Municipal broadband will tend to have the effect of forcing other incumbent providers to compete not only on price, but also on quality of service delivered and on quality of customer service. The incumbents in most locations, typically a cable company and a big phone company, fall down miserably on all counts.

Competition is good.

Strike down bans on municipal broadband.

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The city of Wilson, along with any other city or county providing municipal services of any kind to residents in any given geographic area, should be allowed to compete on equal footing with other existing broadband providers. It is part and parcel that our way of government be flexible enough to acquiesce to the needs of private enterprise, but only when private enterprise is in a position to be free, open and competitive. In many cities and rural areas of the United States, this is not the case. When the availability of a public necessity like broadband internet is restricted by state or local law, this is not only anti-competitive, but anti-consumer and anti-capitalist. It is therefore my belief that any law which restricts competition in the field of broadband communications services be repealed by Federal (FCC) authority, before a Congress bought and sold by big media conglomerates and information providers annuls that ability.

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If a law prevents competition in a marketplace, it should be repealed or prevented from becoming law.

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I am a citizen in the state of Texas whose livelihood depends on having a reliable internet connection, as I work out of my home. I have experienced the internet service of several of the major telecoms and have noted with interest reports that municipally owned internet service is consistently of higher quality than that provided by the private companies. I cannot say that my service experiences have been good, overall. Private telecom companies often have conflicts of interest in attempts to maximize their profits at the expense of their consumers; a municipally owned telecom does not have such conflicts. There would be no stifling of bandwidth requests to content providers that fail to pay "ransomesque" fees to the telecoms to provide full service. If a municipally owned telecom were treated as any other municipal utility then the company would be beholden to its customers, the taxpayers and not to shareholders and other outside interests.

By restricting the ability of a municipality to create a telecom utility if desired by its populace, the FCC is actually discouraging market competition. The telecom companies are still free to provide services to residents of that municipality -- they will just have to provide superior service. This is a "burden" that any company does and should face in the marketplace in order to stay pertinent and competitive. Without such competition, we get a situation like we have today -- where the telecom companies provide only a bare minimum of service because its customers do not have sufficient choice to take their business elsewhere in many regions. Large cities such as the one I live in are more fortunate in that they have some choice, but many suburban and rural locales have only a single internet service provider to "choose" from. Restricting a municipality from offering internet service merely stifles healthy competition to the detriment of the consumers.

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To the FCC Commissioners:

I, like a very large percentage of Americans, do not have functional competition for broadband internet service. DSL is frequently cited as the second option for people, it is no longer sufficient for common uses of the internet. We need more options that provide greater than 10MB/Sec access to that internet, not fewer.

I live in a state, NC, that has an example of a municipally managed, but only paid for by its customers, option. Wilson, NC's Greenlight gets good reviews by my many co-workers who live there and have this service.

The FCC should be in the business of encouraging competition and a competitive environment, this serves the customer/citizen much better than the functional monopolies that we have in so many markets today.

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I am not a resident of North Carolina, but I support the removal of legislations that prohibit the establishment or expansion of publicly owned broadband services, at the city, state, and national levels.

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In particular, I find it troubling that there exists regulations against the expansion of publicly owned broadband services backed almost entirely by cable industry companies and lobbyists, and brought into legislative sessions by public officials being sponsored by the cable industry. While there may exist a technical distinction between lobbying and bribery, to most of the world there is little appreciable difference between the two.

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The primary purpose of public expansion into the realm of broadband service is not primarily the result of a desire for revenues for providing these services. It is to fulfill a public need that is not being met. Most Americans, not just those in North Carolina, desire better service, affordability, support, and choices in their broadband or internet services, but nearly ALL only have a single provider to choose from, despite any objections to the contrary when common sense is applied to them. Service costs rise, support is nonexistent, and all the while profit margins for these private companies increases every day. The privately owned industry is not meeting the expectations of the public.

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The FCC should be allowed to reduce barriers to competition, specifically by enabling local municipalities to decide without interference on the matter of forming a publicly-owned ISP.

Lobbied state governments actively working on behalf of outside corporate interests have no place obstructing progress and competition, and their willingness to blindly protect private businesses lies outside the realm of what benefits the voting public.

I believe fewer restrictions for broadband internet service providers would be an improvement over the status quo. The best way to ensure that consumers get internet choices at competitive rates is to allow competition to flourish. Currently, I am only aware of two options for broadband service at my address. I would like more choices and the idea that there might be a broadband service provider that does not provide cable television so that I can see the fair price of a la cart broadband access. I would like to think that if my service provider treated me unfairly that I would have other providers to turn to. I think allowing more broadband internet service providers assists in making that happen.

Thank you for allowing me to share my opinion.

Seth Strong

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I am from Houston Texas, a city fortunate enough to have competition in the broad band sector. When I moved to my house this last spring ATT was setup but they refused to provide service claiming an outside facility problem (the lack of a port) which they provided no ETA of resolving. In an environment with no competition I would have been stuck with no internet capabilities, something that is largely being considered a basic human right given the evolution of our communications and how people interact with each other, businesses, and the government. When ATT refused to resolve their issues and upgrade their infrastructure to support the houses in my area; I was able to turn to Comcast and receive service.

This was only made possible by the fact that in Houston Texas there is competition amongst broad band providers. States outlawing competition from municipalities is something that should be seen for exactly what it is; barriers to entry so that private companies don't have to invest money in increasing infrastructure even though they have received federal subsidies from our tax dollars to do so.

The FCC's duty to reduce barriers preventing investment to improve the telecommunications infrastructure of the US must be wielded to pre-empt these perverse laws that do not help the citizens they affect and serve to instead reduce the connectivity options for the citizens they effect.

7521744269.txt

Re: WCB Docket Nos. 14-115, 14-116

To the FCC:

I generally support the right of cities to build their own fiber networks, if the residents of that city support it and are willing to shoulder the costs. I don't agree with ISPs that cite "unfair competition". The cities wouldn't be doing this if the ISPs provided the speeds and customer service that users want.

On the other hand, I think the FCC needs to tread very carefully when it threatens to preempt state laws that limit muni broadband. There are serious Constitutional issues and I don't believe Section 706 is the independent grant of authority that the FCC apparently now believes that it is.

Instead of relying on in-house counsel, I urge the FCC to seek the opinion of Constitutional lawyers at the DOJ before taking this step. Having lost in court twice regarding the Open Internet, you need to be very careful and very sure you are doing the right thing this time.

Disclaimer: My current job involves telecom policy, but it has nothing to do with the issue of muni broadband. I don't work for any telco, cable co. or ISP. The opinions expressed herein are strictly my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.

Fred Goodwin
San Antonio, TX

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Municipal broadband would inspire competition in urban and rural markets where none otherwise exists today. Cable companies largely monopolize Internet service and stifle the ability for all consumers to afford a convenient and reliable connection. The Internet has transformed into a basic utility today as most job applications, school assignments and work related tasks must be completed either partially or wholly on line. I urge the FCC to repeal restrictive measures that create no ability for a competitive and well functioning market.

Hello, my name is Clinton Collins. I live in Bristol Virginia. As you may know, Bristol has a utility BVU, that offers fiber to the home throughout Bristol and the surrounding areas, that was created by the City of Bristol. This has helped set Bristol apart from other towns and cities in our state and region. Because of that, we are one of the handful of places in America that offers speeds up to gigabit to the home. I can also attest to the employment opportunities this has created in our area, as I work for a large tech company who moved to the region because of the technical infrastructure. My office alone employs over 300 people. I have a friend who chose to stay in this area, and start a web development and hosting company, because of this network. Before BVU, the regional internet and telecom providers offered nothing in comparison to speed and reliability of the BVU network. They were also very slow to upgrade the infrastructure within our region. Since BVU, you have seen a steady increase in the level of service that the telecoms have begun to provide, to help compete with BVU, in the region. I am very skeptical that these telecoms would have made the investment or effort to upgrade their networks and provide service at the level BVU does on their own. Outside of that, I have been a customer of Comcast and Verizon, and I can tell you the reliability of the BVU service is a level above anything they provide. They do this, employing local people, being an active corporate member of our community, and generally being awesome. It would make no sense to restrict other towns and cities from doing this very same thing, to help rebuild, revitalize, and progress into the future.

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Internet access has become a necessary utility. State laws -- which only serve to enforce de facto monopolies -- should not be allowed to prevent cities / towns / municipalities / regional governments from setting up non-profit internet providers.

It is for the public good. Government should be on the side of the public.

Comments on Docket 14-116 (As of 7-30-14, 2:00 P.M.) - Chattanooga

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I support Chairman Wheeler's desire to repeal state and local laws which prohibit municipal broadband build-outs in any shape, form or fashion. The Chattanooga EPB should be allowed to offer its gigabit internet services in any market not currently being served by a similarly fast service, or by any service at all.

While I generally support the free market to sort out competition and regulate itself, it is important to note that broadband services in the United States are not a free market, especially when incumbent services are allowed to host a monopoly or duopoly by legislating out possible municipal (or other commercial) competitors. Therefore it is important for the FCC to step in and ensure that Americans not only have as wide a variety of broadband choices as possible, but that the choices offered are in numbers sufficient to ensure healthy competition.

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I am not a resident of Tennessee, but I support the removal of legislations that prohibit the establishment or expansion of publicly owned broadband services, at the city, state, and national levels.

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In particular, I find it troubling that there exists regulations against the expansion of publicly owned broadband services backed almost entirely by cable industry companies and lobbyists, and brought into legislative sessions by public officials being sponsored by the cable industry. While there may exist a technical distinction between lobbying and bribery, to most of the world there is little appreciable difference between the two.

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I am a citizen in the state of Texas whose livelihood depends on having a reliable internet connection, as I work out of my home. I have experienced the internet service of several of the major telecoms and have noted with interest reports that municipally owned internet service is consistently of higher quality than that provided by the private companies. I cannot say that my service experiences have been good, overall. Private telecom companies often have conflicts of interest in attempts to maximize their profits at the expense of their consumers; a municipally owned telecom does not have such conflicts. There would be no stifling of bandwidth requests to content providers that fail to pay "ransomesque" fees to the telecoms to provide full service. If a municipally owned telecom were treated as any other municipal utility then the company would be beholden to its customers, the taxpayers and not to shareholders and other outside interests.

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Smaller state governments are easily susceptible to corporate influence.

We have seen how easy it is for a corporate juggernaut such as Comcast to influence lawmakers, and also bring in their powerhouse legal departments to either legislate out competition or to sue it out of existence.

Municipal broadband options, or even other private competition is absolutely VITAL to providing the consumer - the American public - a fair and competitively priced internet. One that is forced to innovate and offer superior service or face market competitors.

The current system benefits only a mega corporation who has either purchased or sued itself into supremacy - all due to a silly law. We have seen just how much municipal broadband has flourished in Chattanooga. There are choices, superior service, and a healthy market.

Please remove the States abilities to prevent fair and open competition.

7521744380.txt

I am from Houston Texas, a city fortunate enough to have competition in the broad band sector. When I moved to my house this last spring ATT was setup but they refused to provide service claiming an outside facility problem (the lack of a port) which they provided no ETA of resolving. In an environment with no competition I would have been stuck with no internet capabilities, something that is largely being considered a basic human right given the evolution of our communications and how people interact with each other, businesses, and the government. When ATT refused to resolve their issues and upgrade their infrastructure to support the houses in my area; I was able to turn to Comcast and receive service.

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The FCC's duty to reduce barriers preventing investment to improve the telecommunications infrastructure of the US must be wielded to pre-empt these perverse laws that do not help the citizens they affect and serve to instead reduce the connectivity options for the citizens they effect.

I am not from North Carolina, but Wilson North Carolina is a shining example of why State's should not be restricted from providing municipal broadband services. Municipalities should not be hindered in their ability to provide the broadband services their constituents demand. It gets in the way of advancing the federal governments priority of building out robust national networks.

Many of the restrictive laws like the ones found in my home state of Wisconsin were the direct result of broadband lobbyists who wanted to protect turf but not be required to provide any basic level of service as a result of these "protections". In addition, the state laws are often so poorly written that municipalities trying to comply with the laws still have to worry about frivolous lawsuits based on unclear laws.

There are close to 90 municipally run electric utilities in the State of Wisconsin and not one of them charges rates that are higher than the state average. That's a pretty good indication that municipalities are very good at providing some kinds of services. Broadband should be one of them.

I fully support the repeal of all state laws that restrict a municipality's right to provide broadband services to its community anchor institutions, residents, and businesses.